



DODGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Dale J Schmidt Sheriff **Scott Smith** Chief Deputy

Parents Who Host Lose the Most

What does the phrase "Parents Who Host, Lose the Most" really mean? That slogan is a public awareness program that is aimed at educating the community, specifically parents, about the risks that parents face when serving or allowing alcohol at parties where underage persons are in attendance.

According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, there is an increase in the following when children drink alcohol:

- Using drugs: Frequent binge drinkers are more likely to engage in risky behaviors, including using other drugs.
- Poor grades: Children who use alcohol have higher rates of academic problems and poor school performance compared with nondrinkers.
- Suffer injury or death: In 2009, across the U.S., an estimated 1,844 homicides, 949,000 nonfatal violent crimes such as rape, robbery and assault; 1,811,300 property crimes, including burglary, larceny and car theft were attributable to underage drinking.
- Make bad decisions: Drinking lowers inhibitions and increases the chances that children will engage in risky behaviors or do something they will regret later.
- Health problems: Young people who drink are more likely to have health issues such as depression and anxiety disorders.

This list is just the beginning of the effects alcohol has on our children. If the risks to your child's safety, wellbeing and future were not enough, don't forget about the liability that underage drinking brings to you and your family. Many parents feel that if they host a drinking party for their underage children, they are doing them a favor. They feel that they can keep an eye on them and make it safe. This is simply not true and is a recipe for disaster.

Hosting underage drinking parties opens adults who are in charge of that party up to civil liability. If an adult who allows a minor to consume alcohol illegally, leads to injuries or damages, that adult can be exposed to civil lawsuit. Homeowners insurance will likely not cover any costs that occur as a result of illegal activities leaving the adult on the hook for any judgments against them.

Adults are also legally liable for allowing underage consumption to occur. Adults who procure, sell or give alcohol to an underage person in Dodge County can face a citation for \$389.50 for first offense up to \$1,082.50 for 4th offense. An adult who knowingly permits or fails to take action to prevent the illegal consumption of alcohol beverages by an underage person on premises owned by the adult or under the

adult's control can face the same penalties. These penalties apply for each underage person and not just one per party.

It is not the goal of law enforcement to put a damper on anyone's party, but it is important that the public be educated when making decisions that could potentially affect the rest their lives. Throughout our careers, my co-workers and I have witnessed the aftermath of tragedies that have occurred as a result of underage alcohol consumption. We have seen parents who tragically have had their child's life cut short. Many of those tragedies could have been prevented if an adult and simply said no.

So when your underage child asks if they can go to that drinking party, remember what you as a parent are risking. It could be your money but more importantly the health and safety of your child. Is it really worth it for one night of fun. Parenting is a great responsibility. I ask that all parents help me to keep our children safe. In the end our children are a huge part in continuing to make Dodge County a great place to live, work and visit.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dale J. Schmidt". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Dale" being more prominent than the last name "Schmidt".

Sheriff Dale J. Schmidt